fore undertaking routine inspections of housing conditions as they have long carried out routine inspections of food handling establishments. The health department inspector can deal with such problems as arise with regard to water supply, waste disposal, heating and sanitary facilities, occupancy and overcrowding far more intelligently than the building inspector; and he can call on the building or fire department inspector in any cases where occupancy has vitiated the safeguards established when the building was approved for construction.

A second vital reason why the health department is the one body which should carry the responsibility for occupied dwellings is that the health department alone has the prescriptive right to formulate general performance requirements instead of the rigid and minute legal specifications with which the Building Code must deal. It would seem eminently wise that—in framing such code regulations—it should consult with the building department, the fire department, the tenement house department, the police department and the zoning board; but the regulations as finally adopted should be in the broad and flexible form of the usual Sanitary Code and not involve the minute specifications of the traditional building Code.

We suggest that the Building Code for new construction may well be left as it is in the hands of the building department and its engineering specialists; but we believe that a Housing Code for occupied dwellings should be drawn up by the health department and enforced by the routine inspection service of that department, with such aid as necessary—both in drafting and enforcement—from allied departments of the city government.

The desirability of such a policy and the details of its application (including the subject matter of such a code) are now under consideration by the Association's Committee on the Hygiene of Housing; and it is hoped that a report on the subject may be available before the close of the current year.

THE KITCHEN GARBAGE GRINDER

THE pen of the Editor has long been itching to deal with the possible future of the kitchen garbage grinder; and has been restrained only by fear of the wrath of some of our engineering friends. Useful experience has been obtained in certain Army barracks[1]; but war conditions have, of course, put a temporary stop to civilian developments. Now, however, the issue must again be faced; and a recent editorial in *Sewage Works Engineering* indicates that our inhibitions may after all have been unfounded.

Morris M. Cohn has this to say in the editorial in question[2]:

> Several cities in the United States have recently been considering the economic and engineering desirability of disposing of all community garbage via the sanitary sewer system. And, thus, a new era is being born in the realm of municipal sanitation.
>
> For the past decade, the use of home food-waste grinders has been growing gradually in some 300 municipalities, as homeowners and realty developers have purchased these household appliances and plumbed them into kitchen sink drain lines. While some 50,000 homes, representing about 200,000 persons, have eliminated garbage storage, the amount of wastes discharged to the sewer system in any one community has had no noticeable effect on the amount of wastes collected by surface methods or the character of sewage carried by the sewer system.
>
> It is only a matter of time until some community undertakes a program of completely eliminating garbage collections and substituting disposal of ground wastes into the sanitary sewer system. Left to develop without municipal intercession, the home grinding process

will develop slowly and it will be a generation, more or less, before a major percentage of homes will use the sewer as the means of transporting their food remnants. But, if a community makes home grinding a city-sponsored project, the conversion from surface collection to underground collection and disposal may occur within a few years.

As Cohn points out, there are, of course, two aspects to such a procedure as that proposed, assuming—as we may assume in the present case—that the devices available will actually perform their task. We must ask ourselves, "What will the process accomplish for the public health?" and, "What will it cost?"

Taking up the second of these questions first, there can be no categorical or general answer. The cost of the kitchen grinding unit is at present high; but its capital cost and maintenance must be balanced against the cost of collection of garbage and its transportation to a point of final disposal. The device will involve a definite increase in domestic water consumption; and addition of ground garbage to sewage will increase the cost of disposal of the sewage since both solid content and B.O.D. will be materially increased; but this must be weighed against the cost of garbage disposal in a given locality. Taylor[3] has discussed the influences of the addition of ground garbage upon sludge storage capacity, sludge drying beds, and aerating. Tolman[4] reviews the experience of two cities which have used the procedure and concludes that one ton of garbage per one million gallons of sewage will increase B.O.D. by only 10 per cent and that sludge from sewage to which ground garbage has been added settles better than normal sewage and can be effectively digested. He estimates the additional cost of sewage treatment due to addition of ground garbage at 40 cents per ton. Both this figure and the estimate of a 10 per cent increase in B.O.D. seem extremely low.

The balance of possible economies involved must be worked out by engineers in the light of local conditions. From the standpoint of the sanitarian, there are great advantages in what Tolman calls "Dual Disposal"—even if the cost is the same or slightly greater. The storage of garbage in the vicinity of the dwelling, its transportation through the streets, and its ultimate disposal, all involve sanitary problems which can be overcome only by meticulous care at all stages of the process. The garbage pail in the kitchen, the garbage can outside the back door, the garbage truck and the dump or hog farm or garbage disposal plant are all potential sources of offensive sights and smells. If not very carefully controlled (and rare is the community where such control exists), they may breed insects and attract and foster rats and other vermin. Disposal by hog feeding may involve serious dangers of trichinosis, as it is practised in many cities.

The domestic privy was once an essential feature even of city life. It is now, in urban communities, an anachronism. We suspect that the garbage can will ultimately follow the privy along the same road.

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RESTAURANT SANITATION GOES SCIENTIFIC

IT is always exciting when science steps down from her academic heights to illumine the processes of daily living. A peculiarly neat and satisfying example